

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING – RESULTS

Town of Rowe
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Monday, May 8, 2023 at 7:00 PM
Rowe Elementary School

Moderator:	Robert Clancy
Town Clerk:	Paul McLatchy III
Board of Selectmen:	Chair Charles Sokol, Vice-Chair Joanne Semanie
Finance Committee:	Chair Daniel Pallotta, Loretta Dionne, Marilyn Wilson, Wayne Zavotka
Town Counsel:	Jonathan Murray, Esq. – KP Law

The Annual Town Meeting was held on Monday, May 8, 2023 at the Rowe Elementary School, located at 86 Pond Road.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM by Moderator Clancy. In attendance were approximately forty (40) voters and nine (9) guests. Moderator Clancy opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence for those who had passed since the last annual town meeting: Norma Denson, Mary Length, Maggie Rice, Kris Swenson, Al Williams, Ashley Brown, Kevin Sprague, Florence Bjork (at 106), and Al Morse.

Moderator Clancy read out a brief greeting welcoming voters to the town meeting. He thanked the Municipal Light Plant and David Dvore for ensuring high-speed internet availability. He then informed voters of the rules of the meeting. Tellers were not appointed.

Assessors Chair Rick Williams spoke to the impact on FY24 taxes, further explaining that the Finance Committee has requested two scenarios to be presented. If the same split tax rate shift is used as this year, the residential tax rate will increase by \$0.42 per thousand to \$5.60. If the maximum split tax rate shift is used, the tax rate will reduce by \$0.32 per thousand to \$4.83. Both scenarios assume all articles are approved as presented on the warrant. The decision about which shift rate should be used will be determined in the fall by the Board of Selectmen. As it stands, the utilities pay approximately 90% of every tax dollar received in town.

Moderator Clancy asked for a sense of the meeting to permit certain department heads that are not registered voters to speak during the meeting: School Superintendent, School Principal, Town Counsel, Fire Chief, and Town Administrator. No objections were noted.

Members of the Finance Committee, Board of Selectmen, and the Moderator then presented Town Clerk Paul McLatchy III with a plaque thanking him for his years of service to Rowe. As he recently moved, this will be his final town meeting in Rowe. A round of applause followed.

Moderator Clancy turned to the Board of Selectmen for comments. The Selectmen wanted to clarify that while they are the ultimate authority on deciding how much of a tax rate shift to use, they rely heavily on the Board of Assessors for their input. Moderator Clancy then read out the warrant greeting.

ARTICLE 1: A motion was made and seconded to act on reports of the Town Officers and Committees.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 2: A motion was made and seconded to authorize, pursuant to M.G.L. c.44 §53E½ and the Town of Rowe General Bylaws, the following sums for revolving funds:

Revolving Fund	Entity Authorized to Spend from Fund	Fees, Charges, or Receipts Credited to Fund	Program or Activity Expenses Payable from Fund	Restrictions or Conditions on Expenses Payable from Fund	Fiscal Years
Emergency Dispensing Site	Board of Health	Receipts Related to the Emergency Dispensing Site Operations	Dispensing medicines or medical supplies during an emergency	Limit of \$1,000.00	Fiscal Year 2024
Recycling Program	Board of Health	Receipts Related to the Recycling Program	Operation of solid waste and recycling programs, membership in and services of the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District, and the purchase of recycled content or environmentally preferable products	Limit of \$5,000.00	Fiscal Year 2024
Vaccine Services	Board of Health	Receipts from Insurance Billing	Vaccine Services	Limit of \$6,000.00	Fiscal Year 2024
School Programs	School Committee	Fees for School Programs	Offset Department Costs of School Programs	Limit of \$10,000.00	Fiscal Year 2024
Old Home Day	Old Home Day Committee	Receipts Generated by Old Home Day Activities and Programs	Expenses of Old Home Day	Limit of \$2,000.00	Fiscal Year 2024
Refuse Garden	Board of Health	Receipts Related to the Refuse Garden Operations	Operation of the town Refuse Garden	Limit of \$5,000.00	Fiscal Year 2024 and Subsequent Years
Planning Board Legal/ Consulting	Planning Board	Receipts Related to Fees for Special Permits and Other Work of the Planning Board	Legal consultation and representation	Limit of \$50,000.00	Fiscal Year 2024 and Subsequent Years
Park Programs	Park Commission	Receipts Related to Park Programs	Operation of programs run by the Pelham Lake Park	Limit of \$2,000.00	Fiscal Year 2024 and Subsequent Years

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 3: A motion was made and seconded to authorize the Board of Selectmen to apply for, accept, and expend federal and state grants as may be available.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 4: A motion was made and seconded to authorize the Treasurer to enter into compensating balance agreements during the 2024 fiscal year, pursuant to M.G.L. c.44 §53F.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 5: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the following sums for stipends for elected officials of the town:

Elected Boards & Committees:	
Board of Assessors (3)	\$5,354.00
Board of Health (3)	\$4,938.00
Board of Selectmen (3)	\$5,928.00
School Committee (3)	\$4,564.00
Elected Town Officers	
Constable.....	\$549.00
Moderator.....	\$439.00
Town Clerk	\$13,835.00
TOTAL ELECTED OFFICIALS SALARIES FROM TAXATION.....	\$35,607.00

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 6: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 for Broadband Principal, raise and appropriate the sum of \$120,000 for Town Road Paving Principal, appropriate from the Assessors’ Overlay Surplus the sum of \$250,000 for Town Road Paving Principal, and raise and appropriate the sum of \$68,343 for Interest on Indebtedness for the Fiscal Year 2024.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 7: A motion was made and seconded to raise the sum of \$552,602 for the purpose of General Government as listed below:

Administration	
General Administration.....	\$138,937
Municipal Audit	\$8,000
Executive Secretary	\$72,052
Administrative Assistant to the Boards.....	\$36,259
Town Hall Custodian Wages	\$13,760
Custodian Expenses	\$4,775
Maintenance Supervisor.....	\$10,430
Legal	\$18,000
Treasurer/Tax Collector Salary	\$62,588
Treasurer/Tax Collector Operations	\$20,250
Assistant Town Clerk Stipend	\$1,200
Town Clerk Expenses	\$5,393
Conservation Commission	\$1,880
Council on Aging.....	\$3,800
Goal Post Editor Wages	\$6,676
Goal Post Operations	\$2,500
Veteran’s Services	\$4,765
FRCOG Services.....	\$32,423
Sick Time Payout.....	\$5,000
Town Accountant.....	\$46,619
<u>Town Accountant Expenses.....</u>	<u>\$4,283</u>
Subtotal Administration	\$499,590
Board of Assessors	
Assessors’ Clerk Wages.....	\$12,880
Assessors’ Reval/Annual Updates	\$24,000
<u>Assessors’ Operations</u>	<u>\$14,650</u>
Subtotal Board of Assessors	\$51,530
Planning Board	
Planning Board Operations	\$1,500
TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT FROM TAXATION	\$552,620

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 8: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000 to be used for the Reserve Fund.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 9: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$644,416 for Public Works and Facilities as listed below:

Highway Department	
DPW Salaries and Wages	\$305,937
DPW Operations	\$230,929
<u>Winter Roads</u>	<u>\$72,100</u>
Subtotal Highway Department.....	\$608,966
Other Public Works & Facilities	
Street Lighting	\$6,000
Municipal Light Plant Manager Stipend.....	\$13,000
<u>Dam Maintenance/Repair</u>	<u>\$1,200</u>
Subtotal Other Public Works & Facilities	\$20,200
Cemetery Commission	
Cemetery Operations	\$15,250
TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES FROM TAXATION	\$644,416

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 10: A motion was made and seconded to appropriate from the Chapter 90 Fund the sum of \$140,978.17 for the maintenance, repair, improvement of town highways, or any other purpose allowed under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 90.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 11: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$195,834 for Public Safety as listed below:

Police Department	
Police Salaries	\$67,266
Police Officer Training	\$10,000
<u>Police Operations</u>	<u>\$13,000</u>
Subtotal Police Department	\$90,266
Fire Department	
Fire Department Stipends & Wages	\$37,536
<u>Fire Department Operations.....</u>	<u>\$56,829</u>
Subtotal Fire Department.....	\$94,365
Emergency Management	
Emergency Management Stipends.....	\$3,864
Emergency Management Operations	\$1,000
<u>Generator Maintenance</u>	<u>\$3,500</u>
Subtotal Emergency Management	\$8,364
Animal Control and Inspection	
Animal Control Stipends.....	\$1,449
Animal Control Relief Officer	\$508
Animal Inspector Stipend	\$532
<u>Regional Dog Kennel.....</u>	<u>\$350</u>
Subtotal Animal Control	\$2,839
TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY FROM TAXATION.....	
	\$195,834

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 12: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$150,138 for Public Health as listed below:

Public Health	
Health Department Stipends and Wages.....	\$80,281
Board of Health Operations	\$69,857
TOTAL PUBLIC HEALTH FROM TAXATION	\$150,138

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 13: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,765,463 for the School Committee to use for the Education of Rowe Students:

Education	
Rowe School PreK-6 Operating Budget.....	\$1,158,568
Rowe School Secondary 7-12.....	\$606,895
TOTAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS FROM TAXATION	\$1,765,463

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 14: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$76,739 for the Public Library as listed below:

Rowe Town Library	
Library Wages.....	\$50,200
Library Operations	\$26,539
TOTAL ROWE TOWN LIBRARY FROM TAXATION	\$76,739

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 15: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$160,433 for Pelham Lake Park as listed below:

Pelham Lake Park	
Park Wages	\$137,303
Park Operations.....	\$23,130
TOTAL PELHAM LAKE PARK FROM TAXATION.....	\$160,433

Passed by Show of Hands

ARTICLE 16: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$500 for Beautification.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 17: A motion was made and seconded to raise and appropriate the sum of \$847,380 for Pensions and Insurance as listed below:

Pensions and Insurance	
Franklin County Retirement Assessment.....	\$177,380
Unemployment Insurance	\$20,000
Group Health/Dental/Life Insurance.....	\$623,000
Medicare Tax – Town Share.....	\$27,000
TOTAL PENSIONS AND INSURANCE FROM TAXATION	\$847,380

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 18: A motion was made and seconded to appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$283,285 for the special projects as listed below:

FIRE DEPT	New Roof for Safety Complex	\$255,000
POLICE DEPT	Taser.....	\$1,600
ADMIN	Septic Systems Pumped	\$1,685
ASSESSORS	Consultant/Legal Support	\$25,000
TOTAL SPECIAL PROJECTS FROM FREE CASH		\$283,285

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 19: A motion was made and seconded to have the town develop plans and specifications to demolish the Gracy House and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$10,000, funds to be expended by the Board of Selectmen.

A motion was made and seconded to amend the article to expand the scope of plans to also include “remediation or repurposing”. The motion to amend passed by show of hands.

The article, as amended, passed by show of hands, unanimous.

ARTICLE 20: A motion was made and seconded to appropriate from the Capital Stabilization Fund the sum of \$260,000 for a Fire Truck Chassis, funds to be expended by the Board of Selectmen and Fire Chief.

Note: Articles removing funds from stabilization accounts require a 2/3 majority.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 21: A motion was made and seconded to appropriate from Free Cash to the Capital Stabilization Fund the sum of \$18,457.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 22: A motion was made and seconded to amend the General By-Laws to add Town Administrator as one of the positions appointed by the Board of Selectmen and to add the following to The Town of Rowe General Bylaws Article III General Government Section 1E. The Officers for the Town appointed by the Board of Selectmen. In addition, the following:

To the extent permitted by law and except as otherwise provided by law or these bylaws, The Selectmen are authorized and empowered, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 41, Section 23A, of the Massachusetts General Laws, to appoint a town administrator for a term of three years and to remove them at their discretion.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 23: A motion was made and seconded to authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the General Court for special legislation to allow, a Town of Rowe call firefighter, notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, to serve in such position until the age of 70, or until the date of his retirement or non-reappointment, whichever occurs first; provided, however that no deductions from the regular compensation of shall be made under chapter 32 of the General Laws subsequent to his reaching the age of 65 in connection with his service to the Town for retirement or pension purposes; provided, however, that the General Court may make clerical and editorial changes of form only to the bill unless the Board of Selectmen approves amendments to the bill prior to enactment by the General Court, and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to approve such amendments which shall be within the scope of the general public objectives of the petition.

Passed by Show of Hands, Unanimous

ARTICLE 24: To transact any other business that may lawfully come before the meeting:

- Town Clerk Paul McLatchy III reminded voters about the election this coming Saturday, from 10:00-2:00 in the Rowe School Gym, and that two seats on the Planning Board have had no declared candidates.
- Town Clerk Paul McLatchy III thanked voters for moving the meeting along. The town meeting he attended on Saturday in another town lasted seven and a half hours.
- Town Clerk Paul McLatchy III lastly thanked the members of the community for being great people to live with for the last 32 years. He will miss them and still visit. The meeting gave a round of applause.
- Ellen Miller asked for clarification on the funding source for Article 10, which was answered to be the Chapter 90 Fund.
- Cindy Laffond requested that the road blockade on Ford Hill Road near the culvert be more visible, especially at night. Executive Secretary Janice Boudreau said that the road would be closed for work in the next two weeks.

A motion was made and seconded to dissolve the meeting and passed unanimously. The meeting was closed at 7:34 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul McLatchy III, Town Clerk
May 10, 2023

A True Copy, Attest: _____
Rowe Town Clerk